



Hiking Trails



Hiking at
City of Rocks

To venture into the City of Rocks is to enter a world of slowly changing granite surrounded by high desert flora and fauna. Access to all parts of the reserve is found through 30 miles of trail. Many sections of trail pass through sensitive habitat. Help conserve City of Rocks by only using official trails and by leaving natural features as you found them for others to enjoy. Many of the trails are rocky and traverse steep terrain. Mountain trails are covered by snow until the middle of May. Check with a ranger or visitor center personnel prior to entering the backcountry for latest conditions.

Safety and Backcountry
Regulations

- Be prepared for rapid weather changes; bring rain gear and extra clothing.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Backcountry sanitation: to prevent contamination of waterways, bury human waste in a hole 6-8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water. Pack out toilet paper and sanitary waste. Do not bury them.
- Carry plenty of drinking water.
- Horses have the right - of - way. Step off the trail and remain quiet while horses pass.
- Dogs must be leashed.
- Respect wildlife: observe and photograph from a safe distance. Do not approach or feed animals.
- Pack out what you pack in.
- Hike on established trails to prevent erosion.

Day Hikes

Trail distances indicate one -way lengths unless stated as a loop trail.

#1 Camp Rock Trail
300 Feet, Easy
The short walk around Camp Rock leads to many emigrant signatures left by California bound pioneers. As early as 1843, City of Rocks was a well known landmark for emigrants on the California Trail. These travelers left their signatures in axle grease as a record of their 2000 mile journey.

#2 Window Arch Trail
300 Feet, Easy
Located behind campsite #44, this short walk leads to the impressive Window Arch which spans over 20 feet. Windows, bathtubs, and caves in the reserve are sculpted through erosion. This trail also offers one of the better vantage points for viewing various rock formations in the city.

#3 Flaming Rock Trail
1/2 Mile Loop, Moderate
Popular with many climbers, this trail provides access into the inner city. Located behind campsite #39, this short loop can also be used to access South Fork Circle Creek Trail.

#4 Creekside Towers Trail
1/2 Mile, Easy
This short walk provides direct access to the inner city and many popular spires. Interesting geologic sculptures are found adjacent to the trail. Spring brings a beautiful cascade of water draining into Circle Creek visible from several areas. This trail can also be used to access the Stairways Trail (additional 1/2 mile) which can be used to make a loop in conjunction with South Fork Circle Creek Trail.

#5 South Fork Circle Creek Trail
1 1/2 Miles, Moderate
This trail serves as main street through the inner city rock formations. The woodlands around the creek are home to many species of birds including Townsend’s Solitaire, Yellow Warbler, Western Tanager and Bullock’s Oriole. Circle Creek also provides a habitat for types of wildflowers and plants not found in other parts of the reserve.

#6 Boxtop Trail
1 3/4 Miles, Moderate
From the start of this trail, hikers are provided with several unobstructed panoramic views of Circle Creek Basin. Bouldering is also popular on several formations along the trail.

This trail accesses Bumble Wall Trail (additional 3/4 mile), which can be used to create a loop.

#7 Tea Kettle Trail
2 1/2 Miles, Moderate
This trail is especially interesting for its variety. Whether you start at Elephant Rock or Bread Loaves, the trail passes through various ecosystems including aspen groves, pinon-juniper forests, and sagebrush flats. Wildlife such as mule deer and yellow-bellied marmots can be seen along the trail.

#8 North Fork Circle Creek Trail
5 Miles, Strenuous
Solitude is at a premium as you travel along North Fork of Circle Creek. From sagebrush flats to high country aspen groves, this trail takes you deep into the “city.” Lost Horizons Arch, the largest erosional window in the reserve, and a portion of Shangri La highlight the hike as well as provides access to Indian Grove Trail (additional 2 miles) and several panoramic vistas.